

Letter, January 27, 1892

FROM THE REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF REGENTS MEETING HELD JANUARY 27, 1892.

“Doctor Coppee then stated that he had the following resolution to offer in connection with the subject of the Astrophysical Observatory:

Resolved: That Congress having appropriated \$10,000 for the maintenance of an Astrophysical Observatory, without reference to any precedent condition of buildings to be furnished by the Smithsonian Institution, that the Secretary be authorized to expend under the general resolution relative to income and expenditure the sums of \$5,000 bequeathed by Doctor J. H. Kidder and \$5,000 given by Alexander Graham Bell in directions consonant with the known wishes of the testator and the donor.

He would ask the Secretary to explain the purport of the resolution.

The Secretary said that he would recall to the Regents that \$5,000 received from the estate of the late Doctor J. H. Kidder, and \$5,000 given by Mr. A. Graham Bell through the Secretary, had been deposited subject to draft, in the Treasury; and did not form a portion of the funds drawing interest. At their meeting in January, 1891, the Regents 2 had resolved in effect that if an appropriation for an astrophysical observatory were made by Congress, contingent on the construction of buildings for the said observatory by the Institution on a suitable site to be designated by Congress, that they would appropriate this \$10,000 for buildings. In fact, however, it was understood that the suggestion of a site by the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee had aroused opposition, and Congress had made the appropriation without any expressed condition, but with the understanding on the part of the Appropriations Committee that for the present the observatory should be in a building already actually in the Smithsonian grounds. There being no present demand,

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then, or likelihood of any, for the money for the purpose mentioned in the first resolution, this second one was offered to enable the Secretary to employ the money if necessary in other ways consonant with the purpose of the donors. The resolution was then passed.”